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Approved For Release 2001/11/20 : CIA-RDP79-01157A000200040002-0

SECURITY INFORMATION

CIA Orientations Officer

26 December 1951

Assistant Director, Research and Reports

Summary of speech

Following is the summary of my speech which you requested last week on the telephone.

Research in the Intelligence Process

Intelligence is not all, or even mainly, the collection of information by agents in the field. Neither is it produced exclusively or even primarily by those who write the final capsule summary of the situation for the top policy maker that we call an "estimate". Between these two, supplying to the collector guidance as to what pieces of additional information it is most vitally necessary to collect, and providing for the estimator the most complete data and the most exhaustive analysis available on the problem he is trying to solve, stands the research machinery not just of CIA, not even just of the intelligence agencies, but of the entire US Government and the world of academic and industrial and scientific research beyond. For most of the answer to any intelligence problem we face, even though it relate to the iron curtain area, can be found in information already available right here at home if only we sift carefully enough through what we already know and put together the relevant pieces of the puzzle with enough patience and imagination.

This is true for several reasons: 1) A country's present political, economic, scientific, and military capabilities, vulnerabilities and intentions are in large measure products of its past. A knowledge of its history permits us to set quite reliable limits on what is possible for it in the present. 2) The laws of science, many of the processes of industry, and even some of the phenomena of social and political life are the same the world over. If we know how they operate here we can say a good deal about how they must operate abroad. 3) In an economy, and especially in the collectivist economy dedicated to a single set of goals, everything depends on everything else. If we know steel production we have an upper limit to tank production, and planes, tractors, trucks, oil burners, etc. cannot burn more petroleum than is produced and refined. 4) Even a tightly controlled society like that of the Soviets gives out inevitably in quite overt ways a vast amount of information about itself. The function of research in intelligence is to mobilize the available historical, technical, scientific, economic, political, and military data; to analyze it seeking the answers to the estimator's problems; and to identify the critical gaps in the puzzle which, if collectors could fill them, would most nearly solve our remaining uncertainties. The function of CIA in research is to coordinate the work of others, and to conduct such research as other agencies cannot perform.

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MAX F. MILLIKAN

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